



*Embassy of the United States
Of America, Riyadh
Saudi Arabia*

UNCLASSIFIED
MEMORANDUM

DATE: Dec 18, 2011
TO: Department of State (CA/OCS/ACS)
FROM: American Embassy Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
SUBJECT: Disposition of Remains Report
TAGS: CASC
REF: 7 FAM 260

The following information is submitted in accordance with and keyed to reference guidelines and in accordance with Saudi law concerning the disposition of remains.

Part I.

Saudi Arabia

Part II.

U.S. Embassy, Riyadh
Address: P.O. 94309, Riyadh 11693, Saudi Arabia
Phone: +966-1-488-3800 FAX: +966-1-488-7670

American Citizen Services

Website: <http://riyadh.usembassy.gov>

E-Mail: RiyadhACS@state.gov

Country Specific Information:

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis pa tw/cis/cis 1012.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1012.html)

Registration with the U.S. Embassy:

<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs>

Part III.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an Islamic theocratic monarchy in which Islam is the official religion. The law requires that all Saudi citizens be Muslim. Religious freedom is virtually non-existent. The Government places severe restrictions on the practice of religions other than Islam. The Government professes to guarantee and protect the right to private worship for all, including non-Muslims, but such protections are not defined or contained in Saudi law and are seldom permitted. Preaching and the public practice of any non-Muslim religion are prohibited. The *Saudi Mutaween*, or Committee for the Protection of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (aka the religious police),

enforce the prohibition against practicing non-Muslim religions in public.

Part IV.

U.S. citizens of the Muslim faith who die in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are permitted to be buried locally, or may have their remains shipped to the U.S. or other location. Non-Muslim, U.S. citizens are generally prohibited from being buried in Saudi Arabia except in emergency circumstances. There is only one cemetery for non-Muslims, which is located in Jeddah. The remains of American citizens are almost always shipped to the United States.

The major mortuary in Riyadh is:

King Saud Medical Complex (Shumaisi Hospital)

ADDRESS: Al-Kabari Street, Shumaisi Area, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Phone: 1 435-5555, Ext. 555 or 777 (Dr. Said Al-Ghamdi).

DISCLAIMER: *The U.S. Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia assumes no responsibility or liability for the professional ability or reputation of, or the quality of services provided by the Riyadh mortuary facility.*

Part V.

1) MAXIMUM PERIOD BEFORE INTERMENT

Muslim tradition dictates that burial must occur before the next sundown following the time of death. However, no law governing this practice exists in Saudi Arabia. There is no cemetery within the Riyadh consular district which permits non-Muslims to be buried. In the Dhahran consular district a cemetery is available exclusively for employees of the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) and their dependents. There is also one cemetery in the Jeddah consular district which permits the burial of non-Muslims. This cemetery is managed by each foreign diplomatic mission in Jeddah on rotating basis. The death certificate and a "permission for burial" document must be obtained from the Governor's Office (Emirate) before a burial may be scheduled. Requests for burial must be submitted to the controlling diplomatic mission at least two (2) days before the desired date of burial.

2) EMBALMING

The remains of Americans who have died in the Riyadh Province must be embalmed at the mortuary at King Saud Medical Complex (Shumaisi Hospital). Embalming is required prior to any shipment outside of Saudi Arabia. The mortuary at King Saud Medical Complex does not meet normal American standards, but the preparation of remains does satisfy the standards necessary for international shipment. The Shumaisi Hospital charges 3,000 SR (\$790 USD) for the embalmment of remains. The price includes a wooden, metal-lined coffin suitable for international shipment.

Upon request, the mortuary will also place the remains in any suitable casket which is provided.

3) CREMATION

Cremation is contrary to Islamic law and is forbidden in Saudi Arabia.

4) CASKETS AND CONTAINERS

Caskets provided by King Saud Medical Complex meet international standards and are handled as ordinary freight. Shipping companies do require that the body be placed in a metal lined casket that meets the "standard for shipment" criteria.

5) EXPORTATION OF REMAINS

Local requirements for the exportation of remains are:

1. Must be embalmed;
2. Enclosure of remains must be in accordance with paragraph #2 above;
3. Proper authorization for transport of remains must be granted from the Governor's Office (Emirate);
4. A certificate of death from King Saud Medical Complex must have been issued;
5. A copy of the police report is required if the death occurred anywhere except in a hospital;
6. Unless the death occurred at King Saud Medical Complex, a medical report of death is required;
7. An embalming certificate must be issued from King Saud Medical Complex;
8. A letter from King Saud Medical Complex, to the appropriate airline confirming shipping arrangements; and,
9. A valid exit-only visa stamped on the deceased's passport.

All Arabic documents must be accompanied with an English translation certified by the American Embassy. Airlines require five (5) certified copies of all documents relating to the death, and a letter from King Saud Medical Complex as explained in subparagraph (5).8 above. Copies of the authorization for shipment are transmitted to the Saudi Passport Office, the Hospital, Police, Customs and the Air Cargo Office at the airport. Because obtaining the necessary papers and translations is a complex and bureaucratic undertaking, the Embassy does provide extensive procedural guidance.

6) COSTS

The following costs have been converted from the cost in local currency at the rate of exchange of 3.75 SR to one dollar, effective on Dec 18, 2011:

	SR	USD
(a) Embalming (including casket)	3,000	800

The average weight of an export type casket with human remains is 120 kilograms.

RIYADH TO:	RATE/KG	TOTAL SR	TOTAL USD
New York	33.00SR	3.960.00	\$1,056
Chicago	37.00SR	4.440.00	\$1,184
Los Angeles	39.00SR	4.680.00	\$1,248
Dallas	38.00SR	4.560.00	\$1,216
Washington D.C	33.00SR	3.960.00	\$1,056
Honolulu	46.05SR	5,526.00	\$1,473

(Rates are based on current tariff and subject to change with /out prior notice)

Handling Charges (Includes: Handling and Custom clearance, booking, pick-up and delivery to airport) SR 2000.00

7) EXHUMATION AND SHIPMENT

Exhumation and shipment of remains is a complex issue in Saudi Arabia and rarely authorized because of religious reasons. Special permission must be obtained from the Governor's Office and then endorsed by the Islamic Court before an exhumation can take place.

8) AUTOPSIES

Autopsies are only performed in cases of foul play or suspicion of murder.

9) REMARKS

Companies operating in Saudi Arabia are responsible for the welfare of their employees and their dependents. Responsibility includes ensuring the proper disposition of remains in accordance with Saudi customs and law. While the Embassy does assist with some aspects of the shipment and/or burial of the remains, normally the deceased's sponsor or representative bears primary responsibility for performing the routine requirements for shipment or internment.